

THE SPIRITUAL ISSUES OF THE WAR

This bulletin is published for readers at home and abroad by the Religions Division of the Ministry of Information, London, to elucidate the spiritual issues at stake in the war, and to provide information concerning the British Churches in wartime, as well as their contribution to post-war reconstruction.

Number 212

NOVEMBER 25th, 1943

CHURCH ASSEMBLY'S GREETINGS TO THE FORCES

The Church Assembly, on November 18th, 1943, interrupted its legislative business to send the following Christmas message to the Forces:—

"That this Assembly, representing the bishops, clergy, and laity of the Church of England, sends its warmest Christmas greetings to all its men and women members serving in the forces of the Crown at home or abroad, and to all those engaged in other forms of national service. It especially thinks of those overseas, some of whom have been separated from their homes for several years, more particularly the men in prisoner-of-war camps. It gladly looks forward to the day when they will return, and is beginning to prepare to welcome them back into the family life of the Church. It prays that God's blessing may rest upon them in all dangers and temptations, and is anxious to assist in every way within its power that 'great rebuilding of family life' after the war, of which her Majesty the Queen has spoken in such moving terms."

The resolution was moved by the Bishop of Worcester, Dr. Wilson Cash, and carried unanimously.

The Archbishop of Canterbury welcomed the resolution very warmly and, speaking of what he had learned from contact with Service chaplains, said that he was sure that the greeting would be welcomed.

NORWAY: QUISLINGS ADMIT DEFEAT

On November 19th the Swedish paper *Dagens Nyheter* published a striking account of the victory of the Norwegian Church. It

said: "The Ministry of Church Affairs and Education is now obliged to admit its complete defeat in the struggle against the Norwegian Church front. Skancke has admitted in a 'highly confidential circular' distributed to leading members of the N.S. that all attempts to force the Church to surrender have failed. It is stated that henceforth arrests and deportations of Norwegian clergymen may take place only in extreme cases of emergency, and that the Party must consistently suppress anti-Christian statements. It is, however, also stated in the circular that the State police will continue to take the necessary steps against 'inconvenient' clergymen. The Department, therefore, evidently wants to wash its hands of the whole affair.

"A summary of the new view on the Church situation has been compiled by County Leader Aass of Hamar (quisling), a summary which in the main agrees with the ideas of the Department. The following points are made:—

"1. It is at present impossible to envisage a solution to the Church conflict, but we must limit disturbances and offences against the law.

"2. The arrest and deportation of clergymen is unsuitable as a method for limiting disturbances and offences against the law in the Church. *The Church problem cannot be solved by police measures.*

"3. Our moral foundation is weakened by anti-Christian tendencies within the Party; therefore the Party must consistently suppress anti-Christian statements.

"4. Our moral foundation is also weakened by the appointment of clergymen who are inferior from the humanitarian (?moral) and educational point of view.

Distributed by

BRITISH INFORMATION SERVICES

An Agency of The British Government

30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N. Y.

Our demands must be stricter, and only first-rate people must be appointed.

"'5. It must be continually emphasised that political activity by clergymen—whether positive or negative—is undesirable.'"

HEROIC DEATH OF A NORWEGIAN CHRISTIAN

Fredrik Ramm, a well-known Norwegian editor, died for his Christian faith at Odense, Denmark, on November 16th.

The Nazis took him from Norway, his own country, in 1941, and sent him to a concentration camp at Hamburg on a charge of pro-British activities.

Six months ago, Ramm developed tuberculosis through his exposure and sufferings in prison. The Nazis offered him better food and less rigorous conditions if he would agree to make munitions for them. Ramm refused. He was instantly placed in solitary confinement. This was, in effect, a death sentence.

He was allowed to write one letter from gaol every three months. In one of the last, he wrote to his wife: "I must tell you again that the values we have, last. A sad thought, a worry for the future, and I pray and am again free, happy and grateful. I have seen clearly that here in gaol I have just as great a responsibility for my day before God and men as outside. Here I must stand alone in my cell and receive God's help and only that, and I get it, too." The letter was signed "Your happy and grateful Fredrik."

When a few weeks ago it became plain that Ramm could not survive much longer, the Nazis sent him back to Norway, where his wife and three sons were waiting for him. He died at Odense on the way home.

Fredrik Ramm represented the Press of the world when he flew with Amundsen over the North Pole in 1926 in the airship "Norge." The Norwegian Foreign Minister said in London recently, "When the truth is told, Ramm will go down to history as one of Norway's greatest heroes. He refused to abandon any one of his principles after the German occupation."

Ramm was one of the leading spirits among the Christians of Norway in their steady and effective resistance against the New Order which the Nazis tried to introduce.

Fredrik Ramm was well known throughout Britain and had hundreds of friends

here, especially in Press and political circles and in the Oxford Group Movement.

U. S. THANKSGIVING DAY

Service in the Abbey

The principal Thanksgiving Day service on November 25 for United States forces in the European Theatre of Operations, under the command of Lieutenant-General Jacob L. Devers, is to be held in Westminster Abbey. This American ceremony was held in the Abbey for the first time last November.

A Thanksgiving Day proclamation sent by President Roosevelt will be read.

Major Edwin R. Carter, junior, deputy senior chaplain, Services of Supply, U. S. Army, will deliver the sermon. The invocation will be read by the Rev. J. H. McKew, assistant chaplain-general, Eastern Command, British Home Forces. The Dean of Westminster will pronounce the benediction. A choir of 36 officers and men of the U. S. Army, under the direction of Corporal Bennett S. Edwards, of Durham, North Carolina, will sing. Sergeant Heinz Arnold, of Long Island, will be the organist.

Other special services will be held at Westminster Cathedral, where there will be a solemn Pontifical Mass of Thanksgiving, and at the New West End Synagogue. At Boston, Lincolnshire, a town which has special links with the Pilgrim Fathers, the Archbishop of Canterbury will preach at a special ceremonial service.

ENGLISH BISHOP OFFERS CHURCHES FOR USE OF U. S. TROOPS

The Bishop of Hereford, Dr. Parsons, writes in his Diocesan Leaflet for November, 1943:—

"The troops of our Allies are assured of a welcome as they come to join our Forces in the common cause. I desire to make it plain that Incumbents will have my full approval if they lend their churches to properly accredited chaplains of the U. S. A. Forces, for services for the troops in their charge. These chaplains need not be Episcopalians, so far as the use of our churches for services of the type that we should call "parade" services is concerned. Episcopalian chaplains may also hold celebrations of the Holy Communion for their troops, in accordance with the regulations of the American Episcopal Church. Chaplains of other denominations desiring to do so should ask the Incumbent

to submit their request, with full particulars, to me."

RADIO MISSION FOR EUROPE

At the beginning of the fifth winter of the war the B.B.C. is broadcasting a "Radio Mission" for English-speaking listeners in Europe. The "Missioner"—The Right Rev. E. S. Woods, Bishop of Lichfield—was formerly English Chaplain at Davos and Lausanne. He will broadcast from his Chapel at Lichfield a series of eight 15-minute addresses from 11.15 to 11.30 a.m. from November 28th to December 5th, inclusive, on wavelengths of 373 and 1,500 metres.

Readers of *Spiritual Issues* will doubtless like to know of, and to remember, this special effort to bring encouragement and help to Britishers who are largely marooned in, or surrounded by, enemy territory.

CONFLICTING TENDENCIES IN GERMAN CHURCH

The tension between Nazi leaders and certain Christian thinkers in Germany is emphasised by an article in *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* for July/August, 1943, which prints a review of a book by Professor of Divinity, Dr. Johannes Haller, published in the Göschén collection, 1939, as volume 1,117, entitled *Der Eintritt der Germanen in die Geschichte*. The reviewer says: One expects to find a contemporary survey of the results of *Germanenkunde* animated and upheld by the spirit which has become an unremitting law in external and internal policy since 1933. But one often comes across remarks which surprise one and make one shake one's head in amazement or prompt one to resolute opposition.

The reviewer then quotes some passages from Haller's book and says: The puzzle of Haller's attitude seems to be solved when one reads the following passage on page 24: "It is not the growing population figure which is the reason for the migration of the people or part of the people—in natural living conditions there is no increase of population and therefore no *Volk ohne Raum* either—but rather internal and external restlessness, the lust for fighting, marauding expeditions, border wars and conquests." The review deals in detail with various points, and concludes that Haller's small book is not an unbiased piece of work, but rather a piece of confessional and tendentious polemics, and it therefore falls outside the scope of the Göschén collection.

In some German areas, on the other hand, the Church is being more closely integrated with the Nazi machine. This is particularly true of Thuringia, an area which has always been a centre of the "German Christian" movement. Details have become known in London about the recently appointed "Bishop" of the Thuringian Evangelical Provincial Church: Hugo Roenck. Since 1927 he belonged to the S.A. At the end of his studies in 1934 he became Provincial Youth Chaplain of Thuringia. In 1935 he joined the German army as a volunteer and took part in the present war as an officer. The new Provincial Bishop of Thuringia has declared, on the occasion of his taking over of the Episcopal office, that he regarded this office as a "revolutionary mission." It concerned the completion of the German Revolution in the religious sphere. One could not yet say, Bishop Roenck continued, what methods would be taken in the matter of the outward appearance of the Church as it used to be; but the goal was unalterable.

In Thuringia, where this man has been nominated by the Nazi leadership as Provincial Bishop, more than 150 parishes are without a minister.

"Volksgruppe" Protestant Bishop's Message

Certain German Church leaders, especially those in German language groups in countries round Germany's border, play a prominent part in calling on Germans to continue the struggle.

A message from Bishop Wilhelm Städel to the members of the Protestant Church in Roumania was published recently in the *Kirchliche Blätter*. Passages from it are quoted below: "Now is not the time to look into the past and meditate whether or not we have fulfilled our obligations. Many of us have, perhaps, never realised the tremendous difficulty of the struggle against a stubborn and powerful enemy. Only since the tragic events of last winter and summer, of Stalin-grad, and Italy's treachery, only since our soldiers have not been advancing as usual and have been adopting a stubborn defence, only since those 42,000 volunteers, among them 15 young Protestant priests, have left our towns and villages, their homes and their work, enlisting in the great German army, only since the women have replaced the men in the fields and factories, do we begin to see, for the first time, the war's iron mask. In the face of such events, it is the duty of the Church to oppose the tempting desire

for peace and to have courage to face all troubles and faith in final victory."

THE DUTCH RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

The following article quoted from the Dutch Nazi paper *Volk en Vaderland* shows the Nazi view of the resistance offered to Hitler's New Order in Holland by the Press and the Church respectively:—

"Only when writers and editors have succeeded in presenting in a convincing manner their faith in our world philosophy and their unshakable belief in our Germanic world and the European cause, will the readers' confidence in the Press once more be restored. It is natural that *editors who remain unconvinced, whatever their other qualifications may be as 'popular enlighteners,' must not be retained* because they daily practise deceit which the public is quick to recognise. Such, moreover, do not fight the spiritual confusion and the evil it bears with it as much as they would under normal conditions. . . . Owing to lack of conviction they cannot find the words that go straight to the hearts of the people. They are able only to stammer out ineffectual and meaningless platitudes."

The writer goes on to declare that "even if the Press has to a certain extent been purged of reactionary elements, the pulpits have not been 'purified' at all. Preachers and priests abuse in an audacious and highly unseemly manner that freedom which has been left to them as a matter of principle in the execution of their spiritual tasks."

"Whereas National-Socialism has refrained from encroaching on the property of the Church, Protestant and Roman Catholic clergymen have set themselves up as leaders in a sphere where they have neither responsibility nor authority. . . . A considerable part of the prevailing spiritual confusion must be attributed to this, while taking over the rôle formerly played by the dissolved political parties and attempting to maintain the political schism in the Dutch people, these petty political preachers are at the same time neglecting their spiritual duties. By demonstrating this attachment to the past, they deny the fact that the Christian religion is not bound to any one political system. They not only leave the fighters for a new political system and a new national conception without any spiritual guidance, but they confirm all those not well up in politics in their view that their sabotage is pleasing to God. Although they lament the heavy yet inevitable

sacrifices of war, no word of dismay or admonition passes their lips when, among the Dutch people who call themselves Christians, one assassination after another gives proof of a rapidly declining morale. They cannot clear themselves by saying that the weapon of assassination is recognised only in Communist circles. They know as well as we do that many 'Christian' circles rejoice both secretly and openly whenever they hear that yet another National-Socialist has been ambushed or assassinated."

THE EVIL WE FIGHT

British readers in various parts of the country will shortly hear of a new exhibition issued by the Ministry of Information, "The Evil We Fight." Its theme is described in one of its large opening panels:—

"There are two Germanys. . . .

"One has contributed Music, Science, Philosophy, Literature and Art to an appreciative world.

"This Exhibition tells of the other Germany—a Germany seeking world domination—a Germany that has brought repression, sorrow, starvation and death to Europe."

The whole Exhibition is a frank explanation of "the evil we fight" and sets out the philosophy taught and expounded by our principal enemies. The panels deal with the Nazi conception of education, justice, religion, the position of women and the race question. There is also some frank treatment of atrocities which have been committed in the occupied countries. A feature of the Exhibition is that German leaders are throughout made to speak in their own words. There is no comment, and visitors to the Exhibition are left free to form their own judgment.

The Exhibition shows how even in the midst of war some voices have been raised in protest. Foremost among these voices are those of Roman Catholic and Protestant Church leaders, from whose recent utterances some striking quotations are given in the Exhibition.

Taken as a whole the Exhibition will provide a realistic, some may think a brutally realistic, picture of the philosophy to which our enemies are committed.

To avoid any misunderstanding, it should be mentioned that the Exhibition is not one which can be obtained by writing to the M.O.I. Its showing throughout the country will be according to a pre-arranged scheme.